

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

In the Specification, new paragraphs [0017]-[0020] have been added. Note that the matter presented in the new paragraphs [0017]-[0020] was present in Claims 2-5 of Application as originally filed; no new matter has been introduced.

Claims 1-11 are pending in this application.

Claims 1-5 have been amended as indicated hereinabove.

New Claims 6-11 have been added to alternatively define the invention.

Claims 4 and 5 had been objected to. These Claims have been amended to overcome these objections.

Claim 1 had been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) over Ikeuchi (US 5,038,140) in view of Lester et al. (US 6,784,790). This rejection is respectfully traversed for the following reasons.

Claim 1, as amended, comprises each numbered slave unit using the AC current to determine when each timing signal symbol is received and each numbered slave unit transmitting a data signal using its number and time when a timing signal is received by the slave unit to determine when to begin transmitting.

As stated by Examiner on page 2 of the pending Office Action, Ikeuchi discloses a main unit and a plurality of slave units. Beyond this, nothing relevant to the present Application is disclosed in Ikeuchi or cited by Examiner from Ikeuchi in the pending Office Action with regard to Claim 1.

In parts cited by Examiner in this Office Action, Lester discloses a transmitter superimposing data pulses on powerline voltage at predetermined time positions within half-cycles of the powerline voltage. The time position of a pulse within the half-cycle determines what number this transmitted pulse represents and whether this pulse is a reference pulse. Lester, col. 5, line 54, – col. 6, line 29, and col. 8, lines 3-13.

“Since only one pulse can be transmitted per half cycle with this circuit design, one and only one number can be transmitted each half cycle. The reason this method of modulating data is called ‘pulse position modulation’ herein is because the value of the data is encoded in the position of the pulse [within the half cycle].” Lester, col. 8, lines 8-13.

Neither Lester, nor Ikeuchi, alone or in combination, disclose a plurality of slave units, each slave unit receiving timing signal in synch with AC and then transmitting a data signal at a moment determined by combination of the unit number, the time of the timing signal reception, and the AC current voltage cycle duration. Therefore, Claim 1 is non-obvious over Lester and Ikeuchi under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) and should be allowed.

Claim 2 had been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) over Ikeuchi and Lester in view of Kato et al. (US 6,021,137). Claim 3 had been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) over Ikeuchi (US 5,038,140) in view of Lester et al. (US 6,784,790). Claim 4 had been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) over Ikeuchi and Lester in view of Kato and Tanaka et al. (US 4,998,245). Claim 5 had been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) over Ikeuchi, Lester, and Kato. These rejections are respectfully traversed for the following reasons.

If an independent claim is non-obvious under 35 U.S.C. § 103, then any claim depending therefrom is non-obvious.¹

Claims 2-5 depend on Claim 1, which, as explained above, is non-obvious. Therefore, Claims 2-5 are patentable over Ikeuchi, Lester, Tanaka, and Kato under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) and should be allowed.

It is believed that the present application is in condition for allowance. A Notice of Allowance is respectfully solicited in this case. Should any questions arise, the Examiner is encouraged to contact the undersigned.

Respectfully submitted,

¹ In re Fine, 837 F.2d 1071, 5 USPQ2d 1596 (Fed. Cir. 1988).

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